

Message Text

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ACTION L-03

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 IO-14 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SPC-03

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P R 221800Z FEB 74

FM USMISSION GENEVA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4221

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BERN

USDEL JEC PARIS

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C O N F I D E N T I A L GENEVA 1188

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM; ICRC; VN

SUBJ: LAWS OF WAR CONFERENCE -- CURRENT STATUS

1. SUMMARY. ASIDE FROM OPENING PLENARY SESSION ON FEBRUARY 20, CONFERENCE HAS HAD NO FORMAL SESSIONS. TIME HAS BEEN CONSUMED IN MEETINGS OF REGIONAL GROUPS AND CONTACT GROUPS AND IN EFFORTS BY CHAIRMAN (SWISS FOREIGN MINISTER GRABERT) TO FIND COMPROMISE SOLUTIONS TO PENDING POLITICAL PROBLEMS. EFFORTS CONTINUE, AND NEXT PLENARY SESSION UNLIKELY TO CONVENE BEFORE TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 26. COMPROMISE ON LIBERATION MOVEMENTS SEEMS ATTAINABLE, BUT PRG QUESTION CONTINUES DEFY ALL EFFORTS. END SUMMARY.

2. OPENING OF WORK OF CONFERENCE HAS BEEN PREVENTED BY TWO PRINCIPLE DIFFICULTIES. FIRST, CONTACT GROUPS APPOINTED BY EACH REGIONAL GROUP TO WORK OUT ALLOCATION OF CONFERENCE OFFICERS HAVE BEEN FRUSTRATED BY DEMANDS OF ASIAN GROUP TO INCREASE ITS REPRESENTATION AT EXPENSE OF WEOS AND LATIN AMERICANS. THIS SCUFFLE SEEMS NEARLY AT AN END, BUT ONE CANNOT BE CERTAIN

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BECAUSE CONFERENCE SESSIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE POSTPONED

IN ANY EVENT BECAUSE OF INVITATION QUESTIONS DISCUSSED
NEXT PARA. THIS HAS TAKEN HEAT OFF ASIANS ON ALLOCATIONS
PROBLEM.

3. SECOND, AND MORE IMPORTANT STUMBLING BLOCK HAS
BEEN SWISS RELUCTANCE TO CONVENE MEETINGS IN FACE OF
THREAT BY COMMUNISTS AND AFRICANS TO BEGIN FIRST SESSION
WITH POINT OF ORDER DEMANDING IMMEDIATE DECISION TO
INVITE NATIONAL LIBERATION MOVEMENTS, PRG, AND
GUINEA-BISSAU. (RESOLUTIONS CIRCULATED AT CONFERENCE
SENT SEPTELS.) ALTHOUGH WE BELIEVE (AND ALDRICH SO
INFORMED CHAIRMAN) THAT CLEAR MAJORITY OF CONFERENCE
WOULD SUSTAIN RULING BY CHAIR THAT SUCH A REQUEST WAS OUT
OF ORDER AND MUST BE DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER APPROVAL OF
RULES OF PROCEDURE, CHAIRMAN OBVIOUSLY RELUCTANT TO ENTER
SUCH A SITUATION IF THERE REMAIN ANY CHANCES FOR
COMPROMISE.

4. ALDRICH, AS CHAIRMAN OF WEO GROUP, ACCOMPANIED BY
DUTCH AND DANISH REPS, WILL SEE CHAIRMAN GRABERT LATE FEB 22 TO
ASCERTAIN WHETHER CHAIRMAN STILL HAS HOPES OF COMPROMISE.
CONSENSUS IN WEO GROUP IS THAT MOST WE COULD ACCEPT ON
LIBERATION MOVEMENTS IS OBSERVER STATUS, WITH
RIGHT TO SPEAK, BUT NOT VOTE OR SUBMIT PROPOSALS.
SCANDINAVIANS AND A FEW OTHER SPREPARED TO GIVE ON RIGHT
TO MAKE PROPOSALS, BUT NOT ON RIGHT TO VOTE. ON
GUINEA-BISSAU, NO DOUBT THAT INVITATION WILL BE EXTENDED.
SINCE GUINEA-BISSAU ON FEB 21 DEPOSITIED INSTRUMENT OF
ACCESSION TO GENEVA CONVENTIONS OF 1949, SWISS GOVT.
COULD CONCEIVABLY ISSUE INVITATION ON GROUND THAT
GUINEA-BISSAU NOW SATISFIES ONE OF ITS CRITERIA FOR
INVITATION AND IS RECOGNIZED BY MAJORITY OF STATES.
PRELIMINARY INDICATIONS, HOWEVER, ARE THAT SWISS WILL
NOT STICK THEIR NECKS OUT ON THIS BUT WILL PASS BUCK TO
CONFERNECE FOR VOTE.

5. ON PRG, WE WILL CONTINUE TO MAKE CLEAR TO CHARIMAN
THAT GVN AND WE COULD NOT CONCEIVABLY ACCEPT ANY COMPRO-
MISE THAT PLACES GVN AND PRG ON SAME LEVEL, AND MOREOVER
THAT WE DOUBT A COMPROMISE COULD BE STRUCK WHICH THE PRG'S
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COMMUNIST SPONSORS WOULD FIND ACCEPTABLE. SHOULD PRG
SUPPORTERS ACCEPT OBSERVER OR SOME OTHER STATUS FOR PRG
INFERIOR TO THAT OF GVN, WE AND GVN DEL WOULD NEED QUICK
INSTURCTIONS, HOPEFULLY PERMITTING US TO ABSTAIN, SO THAT
COMPROMISE COULD BE ACCEPTED. IN VIEW OF RISKS OF LOSS
(OUR BEST PRESENT TALLY SHOWS US STILL SEVERAL VOTES
SHORT), THIS WOULD BE REAL BOON. CHANCES OF SUCH COMPRO-
MISE, HOWEVER, SEEM SLIGHT, BECAUSE THEY DEPEND ON THE

WILLINGNESS OF THE DRV AND ITS COLLEAGUES TO ADOPT A
MORE CONCILIATORY POSITION THAN SEEMS CONSISTENT WITH
THEIR VIGOROUS RECRUITMENT EFFORTS AT THE CONFERENCE
THUS FAR. DALE

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